

\$3,000,000 is being made to convert the Hudson Bay railway into a colonization route or a development route—and when I use the word “development”, I use it in the sense of developing the minerals and other resources in that region of which hon. gentlemen have spoken—why could not a proper investigation be made into the complete enterprise? Such an investigation could be carried on at comparatively little cost to the people of this country, for a period of two or three years. I have discussed the matter with the senior member for Halifax (Mr. Black), and I asked him this afternoon what the cost would be of making use of one of the vessels of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine. He told me that to put one of those vessels on the service for three years between Halifax and Port Nelson would cost not much over \$100,000. I am not allowing for depreciation, insurance, or anything of that sort. Up to the present time we have not got very much value out of these ships, in fact a number of them have been sold for a figure as low as \$40,000. Why not make use of one of these vessels in connection with an investigation of this kind? It could for a period of four or five months each year of the investigating period, conduct complete surveys and give a good return for its trip. As a result a report could be made to the people of Canada fairly and honestly with the desire to bring out nothing but the actual facts as to whether this is a feasible route or not.

Mr. DUNNING: Would my hon. friend permit me a question? Is he not aware that continuous voyages of the kind he refers to were made during the period of work at the port by vessels chartered by the Department of Railways and under its control?

Mr. MANION: Not voyages of the kind I have proposed; I do not think anything of the kind I have proposed has been made. I admit there have been many trips into Hudson bay but they have been isolated in a sense, whereas the whole season should be investigated. Such an investigation could be conducted at a small amount of cost compared with an outlay of from twenty-five to fifty million dollars upon this route which may turn out to be a failure. I do not think our western friends desire to spend any such amount of money upon a scheme the outcome of which is doubtful. Let us investigate first and spend whatever money may be necessary afterwards. Speaking personally, if the reports of that steamer showed that the route was a favourable one for the shipment of grain I am one of those who would un-

[Mr. Manion.]

hesitatingly vote for it. For the sake of national unity, if for no other reason, I would vote for it, because we want national unity in this country and the people of the west demand that this route be developed.

Now, why do I say it is questionable? We have heard reports read time and again in regard to the feasibility of this proposition, and we have heard reports read this afternoon by the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George. These reports are absolutely contradictory as to the feasibility and practicability of this route. I have listened to the reading of the Senate report, and I have also heard the McLachlan report. The Senate report rather supports the scheme and the McLachlan report opposes it. I have in my hand a statement by C. B. Watts, of the Dominion Millers' Association, from which I will read a few sentences. He has looked into the matter from the standard of the shipping of grain. He says it is not feasible and he reports against it. He says:

What are the essentials necessary to move grain in large volume over any route.

1. Low freight and low insurance rates.
2. Large volume of shipping available.
3. Frequent sailings to various destinations.
4. That boats sail on schedule time.

And he points out that these are not obtainable on that route. I have something else which I wish to read, and really my reason for rising, rather than any other, was to read this letter. I ran across an Anglican clergyman who had spent thirty-two years in the Hudson bay territory as an Anglican missionary, a man not interested in the political affairs of the country so far as I know. He gave me permission to use his name. I wrote him a letter asking his opinion on the feasibility of the Hudson bay route as a grain shipping or cattle shipping route. I think the letter is worth placing on Hansard.

An hon. MEMBER: Where was he stationed?

Mr. MANION: I think he mentions the place. He was living in Toronto at the time, but had lived thirty-two years in that district. He says:

In reply to yours of the 28th, instant, I may state that for thirty-two years I was the Anglican missionary to the Indians and the Eskimos who live in the territory east of the Hudson and James bays.

I understand that it is not on the Nelson side, but conditions are very much the same I think. The letter continues:

I left London, England; in the Hudson Bay Company's sailing vessel, The Lady Head, on June 11, 1892 and during that memorable voyage to Moose